Honorable Board Members and Superintendent Beutner:

The Los Angeles Advocacy Council (LAAC) and undersigned XX charter organizations are committed to working with the District to establish charter renewal criteria that strengthens transparency and prioritizes student learning. Our students, families, and teachers deserve no less. With L.A. Unified as our authorizer, we have worked together to establish some of the strongest charter schools in the country. This is a priority that can bring the District and charter community together to create more accountability in our local authorizing environment.

The time is right for us to address the issue of charter renewal criteria head-on. The Board of Education will consider x number of charter schools seeking renewal this month, and make high-stakes decisions about the continued operation of X number of charters serving over X students seeking renewal during the remainder of 2018. In December, this Board will consider staff recommendations to develop a District-wide School Performance Framework to create a "comprehensive picture of school performance based on student learning and achievement."

As these high-stakes conversations move forward, the District, Superintendent and Board have a critical opportunity to protect the best interests of students and educators by developing transparent standards for charter school re-authorization that align with existing state law and prioritize student outcomes.

Renewal Decisions without Clear Criteria Harm Students and Educators

We recognize that this issue is underpinned by inaction to update charter renewal criteria at the State level. But, as a leading authorizer L.A. Unified has the responsibility and ability to define the standards determining which charters get renewed under existing law.

Without clear, consistent, transparent renewal criteria, students, families, educators, and our entire local public education system suffer. Students and families do not have clarity as to whether their school has performed sufficiently and deserves another five years to operate. Educators strive to meet student needs without a strong sense of whether outcomes are sufficient to justify charter renewal. District staff, leadership, and even Board Members grapple with high-stakes decisions without a common framework and perspective on what constitutes success and how to interpret the law: as a result, staff work and Board decisions lack transparency and consistency and can be interpreted as political or subjective.

These issues have meaningful consequences: quality schools have been denied locally and then approved at the County and State, outside the District's oversight; dozens of schools are threatened by the possibility of future revocation based on haphazard and unreasonable renewal benchmarks grounded in the State Dashboard this Board has criticized; and politics cloud important decisions that should be based on fact.

L.A. Unified Should Lead on Charter Accountability Through Updated Local Renewal Criteria

L.A. Unified can and should lead on accountability and student outcomes by focusing on charter renewal criteria. The charter community support clear renewal criteria so we can hold ourselves to those standards, and the District can do the same with an eye towards increased accountability and transparency, and system-wide improvements in student learning.

We therefore respectfully ask District staff, leadership, and Board Members to:

- Assess 2018-19 charter renewals consistently, despite the absence of clear local or update state criteria, by evaluating schools based on their overall student academic outcomes, performance relative to demographically similar schools, and student academic growth or college eligibility. These are measures the charter community has explicitly included in the majority of petitions before the board this year in an effort to improve accountability and transparency.

- Prioritize student academic outcomes and growth in all 2018-19 renewal decisions and policy decisions related to charter renewal, including the development of the School Performance Framework to the extent it is intended to "inform renewal".

- Meet with the charter community to discuss the path to create updated renewal criteria for 2019-20 school year to establish a transparent framework for charter renewal that aligns with State law and prioritizes student learning.

The time is right for us to tackle this critical issue together. Students, families, and educators District-wide will benefit from the important work of updating charter renewal criteria, which furthers the values we share around accountability, transparency, and improved student outcomes..

In partnership,